

# Marine Safety Newsletter

U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety and Environmental Protection Directorate

## Possible Houseboat Recall

The U.S. Coast Guard ordered all houseboat manufacturers in the United States to submit a plan by January 29, 2001 that will correct a design flaw in the boats' rear exhaust system, which could be responsible for deaths caused by carbon monoxide poisoning. The Coast Guard has said it will issue a recall if they find the industry's plans to be inadequate.

Published reports state that more than 100 boaters have died while swimming under the rear deck or behind the houseboats, specifically in Arizona, Missouri, Tennessee, and possibly Kentucky, as a result of the placement of the systems. The deadly gas pours out of the boats' exhaust lines that run from the engines and generators. Rep. Scott McInnis, R-Colo., requested a recall through a letter sent to Coast Guard Commandant ADM James J. Loy in early January.

Somerset Custom Houseboats said the company will repair its rear exhaust houseboats without charge, placing the boats' vents on the sides of the boats. The company also offered to fix competitors' boats for a fee. Stardust Cruisers said its engineers are investigating other alternatives, including using multiple exhaust portals to scatter emissions, the Associated Press reports.

Eight houseboat manufacturers had replied to the USCG by the deadline with suggestions as requested; Coast Guard officials said they expected many more responses to filter in during the next few days.



## Inside:

- 2 USCG RECALLS SOME LICENSES
- 2 FISHERMEN WORKING MORE SAFELY
- 2 SHARK FINNING NOW ILLEGAL
- 2 NAVSAC MEMBERS NEEDED
- 3 SOCP TO HOST MEETING
- 3 SEMINAR ON NEW FIRE TEST PROCEDURES
- 3 WHAT'S NEW ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB
- 4 IMO CORNER
- 5 PREVENTION THROUGH PEOPLE

### Executive Editor

Edward Hardin  
(202) 493-1052  
ehardin@ballston.uscg.mil

### Editor

Jesi Kettler  
(202) 493-1058  
jkettler@ballston.uscg.mil

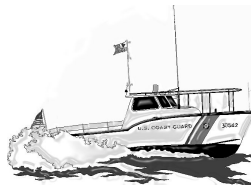
The *Marine Safety Newsletter* is published by the USCG Marine Safety and Environmental Protection Directorate to collect and disseminate information of general interest to the maritime community. The monthly newsletter prints abstracts of major USCG rulemakings, studies, special projects, and related events. Articles from non-Coast Guard sources may not represent USCG policy or views.

The inclusion of the name of a specific commercial product, commodity, service, training, or company in this publication is for informational purposes only and does not imply endorsement by the United States Coast Guard.

Contents of this publication are not copyrighted unless indicated. If not copyrighted, the material may be reproduced freely; citation of the *Marine Safety Newsletter* as the source is appreciated. Permission to reproduce any copyrighted material must be obtained from the original source.

[www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm)

**February 2001**



## USCG Recalls Some Licenses

The U.S. Coast Guard announced a recall and verification program in early January for merchant mariners' licenses and documents issued throughout the past several years from a branch licensing office in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Some blank licenses sent to the San Juan office are unaccounted for and a machine capable of producing merchant mariner documents is missing. Coast Guard marine safety officials now must determine how many, if any, licenses or documents that were issued improperly are being used.

Coast Guard field units in Puerto Rico and around the nation will be checking for suspect licenses and documents. The Coast Guard has asked for assistance from maritime unions, shipping companies and mariners with legitimate licenses and documents to help with the verification of licenses and merchant mariner documents. The Coast Guard will reissue new licenses to legitimate mariners and confiscate any invalid ones. About 500 numbered licenses that were sent to the Puerto Rico licensing facility during the past two years may be subject to revalidation.



Happy 60th Birthday  
Coast Guard Reserves

February 19

## Fishermen Working More Safely

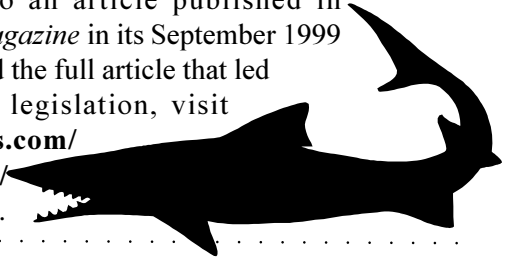


A recent U.S. Coast Guard audit shows that commercial fishermen in New Jersey and the Mid-Atlantic region used more safety methods during 2000 than in previous years. Fewer serious accidents and deaths while at sea also were reported.

## Shark Finning Now Illegal

Former President Clinton signed a bill in late December that outlaws the commercial fishing practice known as "shark finning," and also directs the U.S. Secretaries of State and Commerce to work to curb this practice.

Shark finning is the act of slicing the fin off a shark; often times the remaining carcass is then thrown overboard. Sharks in Pacific waters commonly are unintentionally captured by commercial fishermen in nets set for tuna and swordfish, who then slice off the fins for use in an Oriental delicacy: shark fin soup, according to an article published in *Boat/U.S. Magazine* in its September 1999 issue. To read the full article that led to this new legislation, visit [www.boatus.com/news/reports.htm](http://www.boatus.com/news/reports.htm).



## NAVSAC Members Needed

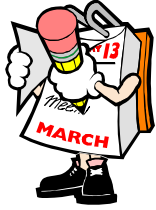
The U.S. Coast Guard is accepting applications for membership on its Navigation Safety Advisory Council, which advises the Coast Guard on the prevention of vessel collisions, rammings and groundings; Inland Rules of the Road; International Rules of the Road; navigation regulations and equipment; routing measures; marine information; diving safety; and aids to navigation systems.

Application forms may be requested by writing to Commandant (G-MW), U.S. Coast Guard, 2100 Second St. SW, Washington, DC 20593, by calling (202) 267-6164, by faxing (202) 267-4700, or by Emailing [Jshort@comdt.uscg.mil](mailto:Jshort@comdt.uscg.mil). The notice and application forms are available on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>. Application forms should reach the Coast Guard on or before February 16. For more information, contact Ms. Margie Hegy, executive director of NAVSAC at (202) 267-0415.



## SOCP to Host Meeting

The Ship Operations Cooperative Program invites the maritime industry to its next open meeting March 13-14 at Litton Avondale Industries Shipyard in New Orleans, LA. Topics are scheduled to include two Brown Water Operator discussion panels, a U.S. shipyard panel on owner/operator relationships and an Inland Waterway Management presentation. Also featured will be presentations on innovative technologies including those relevant for inland waters, and RADM Paul J. Pluta, Eighth USCG District Commander as the luncheon speaker.



SOCP is an industry/government/labor partnership formed in 1993 to share resources and the application of technology to improve profitability, ship safety, training and quality of operations, equipment reliability, productivity and competitiveness for its members.

Additional information regarding the SOCP and the March meeting is available on the SOCP Web site at [www.socp.org](http://www.socp.org). To confirm your attendance, contact Mrs. Kim Rester at (202) 366-0364, by fax at (202) 366-9580 or by Email at [kim.rester@marad.dot.gov](mailto:kim.rester@marad.dot.gov).



Those who cannot attend are invited to view a live broadcast of the meeting at [www.maritimetv.com](http://www.maritimetv.com).

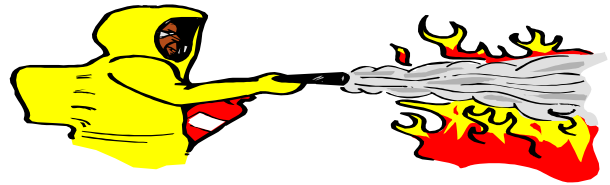
## Seminar on New Fire Test Procedures

The ASTM Committee F25 will feature a seminar in May on the recently established mandatory fire test procedures.

Fire test requirements became mandatory in 1998 for ships that trade internationally; the new fire tests are contained in the Fire Test Procedures Code published by the International Maritime Organization. Prior to these mandates, materials approved by various foreign authorities were often tested at standards of varying performance levels. Because of the non-uniform standards, ships were constructed to various levels of safety, according to a statement by the committee. The goal of enforcing new regulations is to set a standard

minimum level of fire safety for all ships on international voyages. The U.S. Coast Guard has changed its fire security approval process to align with the FTP Code. While the regulatory change occurred more than two years ago, the Coast Guard recently noted a sharp increase in requests for approvals sparked by major shipbuilding projects.

The committee's seminar aims to promote a better understanding of the components of the approval process for materials to the FTP Code. The discussions will address: (1) **How** to obtain material approval; (2) **Approval** categories and associated fire tests; (3) **Planning** fire testing to maximize approval range; (4) **Speeding** up the approval process; (5) **Staying** current during the resurgence of U.S. shipbuilding; and (6) **Follow-up** programs.



Speakers will include members from the marine industry, standards organizations, vessel classification societies, testing laboratories, manufacturers and the Coast Guard. The seminar will be hosted May 9 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Phoenix, Arizona. For more information contact LCDR Brian Gilda, U.S. Coast Guard, at (202) 267-0147, by fax at (202) 267-1069, or by Email at [bgilda@comdt.uscg.mil](mailto:bgilda@comdt.uscg.mil)

## WWW.



What's New on the  
World Wide Web

[www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm)

New, easier way to retrieve the information that you need regarding licensing, STCW, and Marine Personnel

<http://www.uscg.mil/STCW/>

Qualifications of Engineer Officers serving on seagoing vessels with gas turbine main propulsion

[http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/nvic/2\\_01/n2-01.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/nvic/2_01/n2-01.pdf)

## Stowaways Procedures to be Included in Facilitation Convention

Formalities for dealing with stowaways will be incorporated into the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention), the International Maritime Organization's Facilitation Committee agreed at its 28<sup>th</sup> session from Oct. 30 – Nov. 3, 2000.

The amendments to the FAL Convention to incorporate standards and recommended practices on dealing with stowaways will be put forward for adoption at the committee's next session, scheduled for January 2002, with likely entry into force in 2003.

The standards and recommended practices for stowaways reflect the 1997 Guidelines on the Allocation of Responsibilities to Seek the Successful Resolution of Stowaway Cases, which established basic principles to be applied in dealing with stowaways. The resolution also requested the Facilitation Committee to monitor the effectiveness of the guidelines, to keep them under review, and to take such further action as may be considered necessary.

### Standards and recommended practices

The proposed amendments to the FAL Convention note as a standard that the provisions in the section on stowaways shall be applied in accordance with international protection principles as set out in international instruments and relevant national legislation. In addition, public authorities may wish to consider the non-binding conclusion of the UNHCR Executive Committee on Stowaway Asylum-Seekers (1988, No. 53 (XXXIX)).

Public authorities, port authorities, shipowners and their representatives and shipmasters should cooperate to the fullest extent possible in order to prevent stowaway incidents and to resolve stowaway cases quickly and secure that an early return or repatriation of the stowaway will take place. All appropriate measures should be taken in order to avoid situations where stowaways must stay on board ships indefinitely.

The proposed amendments give standards and recommended practices in the following areas: **Preventive measures:** including provision of operational and security arrangements to prevent persons attempting to stow away on board ships from gaining access to port installations and to ships. Recommended practices for ships include the following minimum security arrangements: (1) all doors, hatches and means of access to holds or

stores, which are not used during the ships' stay in port should be locked; (2) access points to the ship should be kept to a minimum and be adequately secured; (3) areas seaward of the ship should be adequately secured; (4) adequate deck watch should be kept; (5) boardings and disembarkations should, where possible, be tallied by the ships' crew or, after agreement with the shipmaster, by others; (6) adequate means of communication should be maintained; and (7) at night, adequate lighting should be maintained both inside and along the hull. **Treatment of the stowaway while on board:** Stowaway incidents should be dealt consistently with humanitarian principles and due consideration must always be given to the operational safety of the ship and the safety and well being of the stowaway. **Deviation from the planned route:** As a standard, public authorities should urge all shipowners operating ships entitled to fly their flag to instruct their masters not to deviate from the planned voyage to seek the disembarkation of stowaways discovered on board the ship after it has left the territorial waters of the country where the stowaways embarked, unless: (1) permission to disembark the stowaway has been granted by the public authorities of the state to whose port the ship deviates; (2) repatriation has been arranged elsewhere with sufficient documentation and permission for disembarkation; or (3) there are extenuating security, health or compassionate reasons. **Disembarkation and return of a stowaway:** Gives standards and recommendations for the state of the first port of call according to the voyage plan; Subsequent port of calls; State of Nationality or Right of Residence; State of Embarkation; the flag state; Return of stowaway. **Cost of return and maintenance of stowaways:** Gives recommended practices, including the keeping of costs to a minimum, as far as practicable and according to national legislation, if they are to be covered by the shipowner.

A number of countries expressed reservations about certain elements of the proposed standards and recommended practices on stowaways. The FAL Convention provides that any contracting government that finds it impracticable to comply with any international standard, or deems it necessary to adopt differing regulations, must inform the secretary-general of IMO of the "differences" between its own practices and the standards in question. The same procedure applies to new or amended standards.

The FAL Convention has been ratified by 85 countries, representing 53.67 percent of world shipping tonnage (as of Nov. 30, 2000).



## Partnership Success!

The U.S. Coast Guard and the Chamber of Shipping of America (CSA), through their Prevention Through People Partnership, have just completed an important communications project that will help mariners. This partnership was created to work on minimizing non-essential communications that occur during critical operations, with the intent of improving communication between members of the bridge team. To gather statistics, information was collected from mariners through an anonymous survey. More than 350 surveys were collected throughout a two-year period from all ship types covering arrivals in ports worldwide. Some of the findings and recommendations are highlighted below.

### Findings:

- The communication types recognized as the most essential and properly scheduled (highest priority) were, not surprisingly, those associated with vessel safety and safety of navigation (including exchanges prior to and during pilot boarding, information exchange during the Master/Pilot boarding conference, communications with vessel traffic services and/or nearby waterway traffic and communications with docking tugs).
- The lowest priority communications were identified as those between the vessel and either the owner/operator (the "home office") or those involving visitors, surveyors, regulators or contractors who were scheduled to board the vessel on docking.
- The bridge team is challenged more by number of communication requirements than by excessive length of any one-communication type.
- The single most distracting communication is false alarms attributable generally to the GMDSS receiver. Some responses indicated that the false alarm distraction was so great that the equipment

was turned off once the vessel was in transit from the pilot station to the dock.

- The next most distracting communication issue is the volume of excessive or non-essential traffic on VHF channels, particularly safety and commercial working channels.
- Responses also noted that significant distractions occur due to non-essential use of satellite telephones and cellular/portable phones.

### Recommendations:

- Vessel owners, operators, masters, crew and regulatory agencies are urged to review existing communications requirements and where possible, streamline these requirements to minimize their impact on ship safety during critical navigation periods.
- In situations where removal of existing communications requirements are improper or impractical with regard to the safe navigation of vessels, stakeholders are urged to consider scheduling these required communications at a time that will result in minimal impact to the safe navigation of vessels.
- Additional efforts should be focused on mitigating impacts in key and recurring areas of communications challenges; namely GMDSS false alarms, overload of working channels with both essential and non-essential communications and non-essential use of satellite and cellular telephones during critical periods of navigation.

A copy of the complete survey report of findings is available upon request:

Chamber of Shipping of America.

1730 M Street, Suite 407

Washington, DC 20036

Fax: (202) 659-3795

Email: [KJMetcalf@msn.com](mailto:KJMetcalf@msn.com)

### PRINCIPLES

- Take a Quality Approach
- Honor the Mariner
- Seek Non-Regulatory Solutions
- Share Commitment
- Manage Risk

### VISION

To achieve the world's safest, most environmentally sound and cost-effective marine operations by emphasizing the role of people in preventing casualties and pollution.

### GOALS

- Know More
- Train More
- Do More
- Offer More
- Cooperate More

### Contact us directly with your PTP story:

Commandant (G-MSE-1), U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2100 Second Street, SW, Washington, DC 20593-0001; (202) 267-2997; (202) 267-4816 FAX; e-mail: [fldr-he@comdt.uscg.mil](mailto:fldr-he@comdt.uscg.mil)

### Contributions

*Marine Safety Newsletter* and *Proceedings* magazine welcome manuscript and photo submissions for publication. No payment can be made for manuscripts or photos submitted for publication. However, an author or photo credit byline will be given. The Editor reserves the right to make any editorial changes in manuscripts, which he believes will improve the material without altering the intended meaning. All correspondence should be addressed to: Editor, U.S. Coast Guard, National Maritime Center, 4200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 630, Arlington, VA 22203-1804.

### Deadlines

- The Marine Safety Newsletter is published monthly on the 5th of each month.
- The deadline for articles, calendar events, and regulatory information is on the 25th of the previous month.
- Readers receive their copy of the *Marine Safety Newsletter* around the 15th of each month.

### Up to the Minute News

Items missing the deadline for the *Marine Safety Newsletter* are posted on the World Wide Web at:

**[www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm).**

### Address Changes

If you would like to receive the Marine Safety Newsletter or change your address (be sure to send label or include code number), please call **(202) 493-1053** or fax **(202) 493-1065**.

**FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED**

MARINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER EDITOR  
U.S. COAST GUARD  
NATIONAL MARITIME CENTER  
4200 WILSON BLVD., SUITE 630  
ARLINGTON, VA 22203-1804

PERMIT NO. G-157  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD (DOT)  
PRESORTED STANDARD  
POSTAGE AND FEES PAID